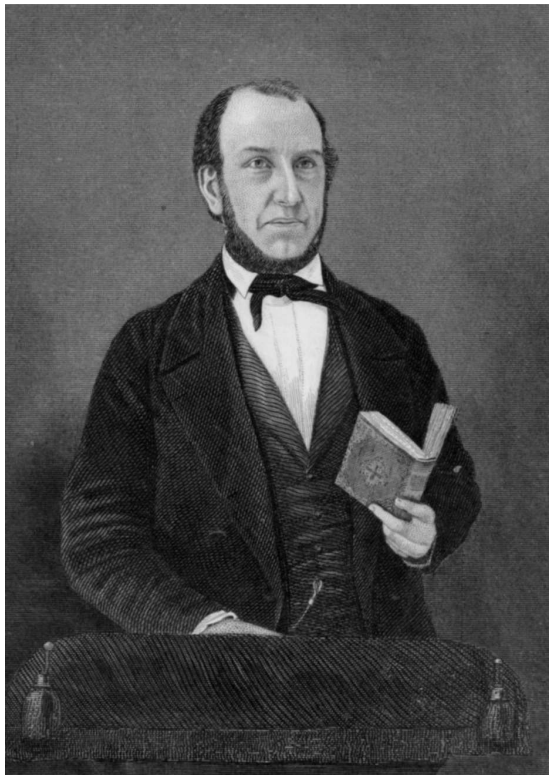


JOHN DOWLING
1807 - 1878

by Jeff Straub

The American Baptist cause was regularly strengthened when their British cousins decided to emigrate to the United States and commence ministry here. In addition to strengthening the cause in America numerically, such individuals also strengthened the work theologically when their heritage was steeped in the robust Particular Baptist tradition. Of course, not all British Baptist immigrants held those views, but those who did, did much for the Baptist movement in the New World. Among this particular company was Welshman Morgan Edwards (1722-1795), who had come in 1761 through the influence of the Englishman John Gill. Edwards greatly encouraged Baptist work in the Middle Colonies through his ministry at the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia and later as a collector of American Baptist historical records, becoming the first historian of American Baptists.[1]

A similar thing could be said of John Dowling,[2] the subject of

[1] On Edwards and his history, see Howard R Steward, *A Dazzling Enigma: The Story of Morgan Edwards*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995; Thomas R. McKibbens, Jr. and Kenneth L. Smith, *The Life and Works of Morgan Edwards*. New York: Arno Press, 1980; and Eve B. Weeks and Mary B. Warren, eds., *Materials Towards a History of the Baptists. By Morgan Edwards, A.M.* Danielsville, GA: Heritage Papers, 1984, two volumes. [For a briefer overview see the essay by Howard R. Stewart, "Morgan Edwards 1722-1795," in *A Noble Company*, 3 (2013): 117-132 —*Ed*.]

[2] For biographical works on Dowling, see Enoch Hutchinson, "Biographical Sketch of Rev. John Dowling, D.D.," in *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record* (New York: Z. P. Hatch), 9 (1850), No. 4 (Apr.): 105-114; William R. Williams, *Earthly Paths Needing Heavenly Guidance. A Discourse on the Life and Character of the late Rev. John Dowling* (New York: Daniel C. Potter, 1879), also published as idem., "The Rev. John Dowling," in *The Baptist Home Mission Monthly* (New York: Baptist Home Mission Rooms), 1 (1879), No. 3 (Mar.): 129-132; "John Dowling, D.D.," in William Cathcart, ed., *The Baptist Encyclopedia* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), 344; Matthew H. Smith, *Sunshine and Shadow in New York* (Hartford, CT: J. B. Burr, 1868), 589-592; and "John Dowling, D. D.," in J. Alexander Patten, *The Lives of the Clergy of New York and Brooklyn* (New York: Atlantic Publishing Co., 1874), 149-151.

this essay, who was born on May 12, 1807, in Pevensey, England.[3] Little is known of his parents. His father Isaac was born in 1780, also at Pevensey. Both parents were nominal members of the Church of England, so John would have received sprinkling as an infant. At the age of seven, Dowling's mother came under the influence of a Particular Baptist minister, Thomas Gough (d. 1841) of nearby Brighton,[4] and was converted.[5] She soon became a member of a Baptist church via immersion. The family moved to London, where Dowling attended the Sunday school at the Eagle Street Baptist Church, then under the pastoral care of Joseph Ivimey (1773-1834).[6]

John wasn't converted until the age of 16. He read *A Drop of Choice Honey from the Rock Christ* by the Particular Baptist minister Thomas Wilcox (1621-1687), which influenced him toward the Gospel.[7] Ivimey, who baptized him on May 30, 1824, at the age of seventeen, said on the occasion, "O that many more may come out of the Sunday-school into the church of Christ!"[8]

[3] Pevensey is variously spelled in the literature.

[4] For a brief introduction to Thomas Gough, Sr. (or Goff?) and the Baptist church at Brighton, see *The Churches of Brighton* (London: Infield, n. d.), 3: 87-91. Curiously, Gough is mentioned only once in Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists* (London: Isaac T. Hinton, 1830), 4: 314, at his next church in Westbury Leigh in 1816.

[5] As to the history of Eastbourne, including Pevensey, there was a dissenter's chapel called Chapel Drove, established near the end of the eighteenth century or around the beginning of the nineteenth. It seems that this chapel birthed both a Calvinist Independent chapel and the Particular Baptist chapel, Marsh Chapel, where Gough preached. See Wright, *Bygone Eastbourne* (London: Spottiswoode, 1902), 217-234.

[6] Material on Ivimey is abundant. The standard biography is George Pritchard, *Memoir of the Life and Writings of Joseph Ivimey*. London: George Wightman, 1835. [For a recent study on his life, see J. C. Doggett, "Joseph Ivimey (1773-1834)," in Michael A. G. Haykin, ed., *The British Particular Baptists, 1638-1910* (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press), 3 (2003): 113-131 —*Ed*.]

[7] On Wilcox, see J. Stephen Yuille, *Looking unto Jesus: The Christ-Centered Piety of Seventeenth Century Baptists* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2013), 16 ff.; Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*. 4 vols. (London: for the author, 1738-1740), 3 (1740): 101.

[8] Hutchinson, "John Dowling," 107.

Just how John Dowling was educated is unclear from the historical record, but clearly, he had a substantial education, though it may not have been formal. As a dissenter, he would have been barred from the established schools, such as the universities in London and environs. Nevertheless, he taught school for about a decade, starting with his eighteenth year. He was first a tutor, then an instructor at nineteen in Latin and literature at Clapham Rise Boarding School. At twenty-one, he was teaching Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and French at Buckinghamshire Classical Institute, a boarding school run by Rev. Ebenezer West. He chose this location because of a good theological library in which he could study to prepare himself for any future ministry the Lord might have for him. Finally, he established the Woodstock Boarding School at Oxfordshire.[9]

These were formative years for Dowling, as he would begin a writing career that would span his entire life. During this time, he authored three "school-books." In 1831, as the school master at Woodstock, he wrote *An Introduction to Goldsmith's Grammar of Geography,*[10] *Three Hundred Problems on Maps and Globes*,[11] and *Key to the Five hundred questions on the maps of Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America, and the British Isles.*[12] During this time, he occasionally preached in neighborhood chapels and led in Sunday school work. He finally turned over this school to another so that he might come to America with his family.

In the midst of his teaching and preaching work, Dowling had married Cornelia Langridge, a member of Ivimey's church and a Sunday school teacher, in July 1829. He was twenty-two. With a greater desire to serve Christ more fully, he and his growing family, which now included two small daughters—an infant and two-year-old Jennie, immigrated to the United States.[13] It was

[9] *Ibid*., 108.

[10] London, 1832.

[11] Hutchinson, "John Dowling," 108.

[12] London: Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1831.

[13] Jennie Langridge Dowling was born June 5, 1830 at Hook Norton, England. She married Gasherie DeWitt II on October 15, 1849, and died July 11, 1917. See Harold N. DeWitt, comp., *Gasherie DeWitt II: His Ancestors and Descendants* (Ann Arbor, MI: Edwards Brothers, 1948), 36. This work also contains a brief biographical sketch of Dowling, 42-44. The details for this were copied from "Dowling, John," *National Cyclopedia of*

now 1832, and the Asiatic cholera was sweeping England. Moving to avoid the plague, he was also driven west because of the political situation in England. The promise of greater usefulness in the New World enticed him. With abounding optimism, the Dowlings made their way to America.

Family loss, ordination, and second marriage

Arriving at New York on August 19th, Dowling discovered that the plague, from which he sought refuge, had made its way to America. Locating his family in a part of the city not yet affected by the disease, he sought for a place to serve. Receiving the advice of city pastors, Dowling was told of needs along the Hudson River in Dutchess County. Leaving his family in the care of another family that had also emigrated from England (and whom they knew at Ivimey's church), Dowling began to survey the field. In September of 1832, while he was investigating a village[14] where he might minister, he received a letter written in a strange hand (as it turns out, by Archibald Maclay, a Baptist pastor from the city), informing him that his wife had suddenly become ill and died of the cholera.[15] Dowling returned to the city to find that not only had his wife died, but his infant daughter as well. After spending a couple of weeks in the home of Aaron Perkins, Baptist pastor at Poughkeepsie,[16] grieving their passing and contemplating his next move, Dowling returned to Catskill, New York, accepting the charge of a small pastorless church. He was ordained on November 14, 1832. An early biographer well summarized Dowling's qualifications for ministry:

American Biography (New York: James T. White), 9 (1899): 216.

[14] In the vicinity of Wappinger Creek. Cf. *Baptist Home Missions of North America* (New York: Baptist Home Mission Rooms, 1883), 601.

[15] The cholera epidemic of England, from which he fled, came to America in 1832, in the same way Dowling did—onboard ship. It was brought by the immigrants then entering the United States. Cf. Dhiman Barua and William B. Greenough, III, eds., *Cholera* (New York: Plenum Medical Book Co., 1992), 10. On this particular outbreak, see Charles Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, 1866* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962), 13 ff.

[16] On this church, see James H. Smith, *History of Dutchess County, New York* (Syracuse, NY: D. Mason, 1882), 423-424.

> I believe that the Council were unanimously of the opinion that brother Dowling brings to the work in which he is engaged, not only respectable literary attainments, united with a pious and fervid Christian eloquence; but, that his theological orthodoxy, and unaffected humility, will commend him to the affections of all who love our ascended Redeemer.[17]

Among those participating in the ordination were Baptist leaders Charles G. Sommers and Archibald Maclay.

To help Dowling get established, the American Baptist Home Mission Society, which had been formed the same year and had funded his survey trip to Dutchess County, underwrote his ministry at Catskill for forty-eight weeks.[18]

Dowling did not remain single long. On March 4, 1833, he married Maria Sampson Perkins (1809-1897), who bore him five children—two daughters and three sons: 1) Cornelia Maria was born in Rhode Island in 1835;[19] 2) John William, on August 11, 1837, in New York, who became a doctor;[20] 3) Joseph Ivimey in Rhode Island in 1843;[21] 4) Lilia Rebecca in New York City in

[17] The details of the ordination service may be found in Hutchinson, "John Dowling," 111-112.

[18] 1833-1834. "Missionary Table," *Fortieth Annual Report of the American Baptist Home Mission Society* (New York: American Baptist Home Mission Rooms, 1872), 64. Cf. *Baptist Home Missions*, 600.

[19] She attended Mount Holyoke Female Seminary and married Robert Rogers of New York, June 2, 1858. John W. Leonard, *History of the City of New York, 1609-1909* (New York: The Journal of Commerce and Commercial Bulletin, 1910), 715; *General Catalogue of Mount Holyoke College, 1837-1911* (South Hadley, MA: By the college, 1911), 179. Her testimony of conversion was written up in "A Daughter's Conversion," *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record* (New York: Z. P. Hatch), 11 (1852), No. 3 (Mar.): 157-158. Also included is a poem by Cornelia, "Gaze Upward," *ibid*., 159.

[20] "Dowling, John William," in Egbert Cleave, *Cleave's Biographical Cyclopedia of Homeopathic Physicians and Surgeons* (Philadelphia: Galaxy, 1873), 473-475. John William was a homeopathic doctor of some note. See his obituary in the *New York Times*, January 16, 1892, 5, and the funeral notice in the *New York Times*, January 19, 1892, 9.

[21] Cuyler Reynolds, ed., *Hudson-Mohawk Genealogical and Family Memoirs* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1911), 306.

1845;[22] and 5) George Thomas, on June 2, 1849, in New York. George also served as a Baptist, then Episcopalian pastor.[23]

Pastoral labors

John Dowling was an active Baptist minister in New York, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey through his long ministerial career. Many of the churches in which he served enjoyed his ministry for only brief periods of time. His frequent moves took him to larger, more significant fields of ministry. Dowling's charge at Catskill was the first of many brief ministries. He was so successful that those seeking to attend his preaching soon outgrew the church's small building. "His usefulness being thus circumscribed, he felt it his duty to accept a call, which he soon received, to a wider field of service."[24] On March 27, 1834, he

[22] Like her sister, she also attended Mount Holyoke. She married John Love, Jr., a Baptist minister of New York, in 1870. *General Catalogue of Mount Holyoke College*, 179. Her obituary "Mrs. Lilia Dowling Love," is in *Frank Leslie's Sunday Magazine*, 16 (July-Dec. 1884): 491-492.

[23] Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopedia*, 343-344. The legacy of George Dowling warrants its own story. He was converted at thirteen and was baptized by his father. He entered the College of the City of New York to study business, but after two years left to pursue ministry, studying at Madison and Crozer. His first pastorate was in New Jersey. He went to Third Baptist, Providence, Rhode Island, and then to Central Baptist, Syracuse, New York, where he stayed for five years. In 1877, he became pastor of Euclid Avenue Baptist, Cleveland, Ohio, home of John D. Rockefeller, Sr. He baptized John Jr., son of the wealthy Baptist. By this point in life, George's theological sensibilities were shifting. He embraced open communion in 1888 and by 1894, he left the Baptists altogether, seeking ordination from the Episcopalians. Cf. *New York Evangelist,* Aug. 2, 1888, 6; *ibid*., Oct. 18, 1888, 4; *The New York Observer*, Dec. 20, 1906, 822. George was a theological "progressive," beyond rejecting close communion. He embraced evolution, and "squinted in the direction of future probation." Cf. "Dr. George T. Dowling's Creed," *New York Times*, July 21, 1888, 1. He was called to Fifth Avenue Baptist in New York, but never served as pastor. After he left Euclid Avenue, he went into the Episcopal Church. In 1900, he was preaching in Los Angeles "on the condition that he shall have liberty to preach 'as the broadest kind of Broad Churchman.' " Cf. *The Watchman* (Boston), June 14, 1900, 18.

[24] Hutchinson, "John Dowling," 112. The church at Catskill reported its membership at 71 at the annual meeting of the Hudson River Association in 1833. *Minutes of the Hudson River Baptist Association*, 1833, 3.

was installed as pastor of the Second Baptist Church of Newport, Rhode Island,[25] having left the growing work at Catskill in the capable hands of his brother Thomas Dowling, who was ordained as pastor there, January 16, 1834. Thomas, also having emigrated from England, had recently joined John in the work.[26] Dowling's ministry at Newport seems to have been blessed by his coming. The church reported in 1835 a membership of 410 with 81 additions by baptism, making it the second largest church in the Warren Association, with more than three times as many baptisms that year as any other church.[27]

In 1836, Dowling left Newport to aid a new church in New York City, the West Baptist Church. However, even with his help, the church failed to gain momentum, due largely to the great New York fire of 1835[28] and the financial panic of 1837.[29] His ministry

[25] *The American Baptist Magazine* (Boston: John Putnam), 14 (1834), No. 6 (June): 252.

[26] *Ibid.*, No. 4 (April): 168.

[27] See "Rhode Island Convention," I. M. Allen, *Triennial Baptist Register* (Philadelphia: Baptist General Tract Society, 1836), 106.

[28] Considered the worst fire in New York's history, it started on December 16. A night watchman, making his rounds in the downtown, smelled smoke. Within fifteen minutes, fifty buildings were on fire. The fire was impossible to fight as the temperature was 17 degrees below zero and the East River was frozen, making it impossible to pump sufficient water to tame the inferno. Fire hoses also froze and the blaze burned for fifteen hours, consuming the Stock Exchange and the downtown area. It was finally brought under control when firefighters created a firewall around the fire by blowing up nearby buildings. When the smoke cleared, 700 buildings had been destroyed and damages were estimated between $20 and $40 million. Twenty-three of the city's twenty-six insurance companies went bankrupt. It was the most significant fire globally since the great fire of London in 1666. As a result, New York City revamped its water plan, creating the Croton water system, to prohibit this from happening again. Jasmin K. Williams, "The Great Fire of 1835," *The New York Post*, January 16, 2007. Available online. Accessed March 16, 2017.

[29] Believed to be "America's first Great Depression," the Panic of 1837 was a global financial crisis that started as a ripple effect, created when the Bank of England, due to low cash reserves, raised interest rates from 3% to 5%, forcing its American counterparts to follow suit. This resulted in a devaluing of "King Cotton," America's number one export, which lost 25% of its value. At this time, the United States was still largely an agrarian society, and the reduction in cotton prices reverberated throughout the

at West Baptist was marked by one notable achievement. During this time he baptized George H. Hansell (1814-1905), later to become the chronicler of the Baptists of the City of New York.[30]

From West Baptist, Dowling returned to Rhode Island to pastor the second Baptist church in Providence, Pine Street Baptist, in February 1839. His ministry at Providence also flourished. In the autumn of 1841, Jacob Knapp held meetings in Providence and "a considerable number" of converts were baptized by Dowling into his church that year.[31] He returned to New York a short time later in 1844 to become the second pastor of the Berean Baptist Church following the ministry of his friend, Aaron Perkins. At the time Dowling came to this church, it was in a new building with a seating capacity of 1,200.[32] He remained at this church until 1850, but would pastor it again in 1856, remaining until 1869.[33]

Hope Chapel Baptist Church of New York City, founded in 1847, soon sought the services of Dowling following the early retirement in October 1849 of its founding pastor, David Bellamy (1806-1864), for health reasons.[34] Dowling remained only a couple

economy. The great financial tsunami disrupted everything in its wake. Nearly half of the 850 banks in the United States failed in whole or in part. Cf. Alasdair Roberts, *America's First Great Depression: Economic Crisis and Political Disorder After the Panic of 1837* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

[30] George H. Hansell, *Reminiscences of Baptist Churches and Baptist Leaders in New York City and Vicinity, 1834-1898* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1899), 5.

[31] Rufus Babcock, Jr. and John O. Choules, eds., *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Chronicle* (New York: John R. Bigelow), 1 (1842), No. 1 (Jan.): 30.

[32] For a brief introductory history of Berean, see Jonathan Greenleaf, *A History of All of the Churches in the City of New York from the First Settlement to the Year 1846* (New York: E. French, 1846), 267.

[33] Berean Baptist Church eventually saw Edward Judson, son of the pioneer Burma missionary Adoniram Judson, become its pastor. The church changed its name in 1891 to The Memorial Baptist Church of New York City, and later the Judson Memorial Church. Cf. Hansell, *Reminiscences of Baptist Churches*, 157.

[34] Bellamy was formerly pastor of the Stanton Street Baptist Church in New York City from 1841-1846. Hope Chapel, which was organized April 22, 1847, has had a long history and lists a number of prominent Baptists as pastor. Dowling was followed in ministry by A. D. Gillette (1807-1882),

of years before he was called to Philadelphia and the Fifth Baptist Church.[35] While there, he presided over the ordination of Charles Howard Malcom, preaching from 1 Corinthians 9:16 on "What is Implied in the Call to Preach."[36] Later in 1856, Dowling returned to the Berean Church in New York for a second pastorate, where he stayed for the next thirteen years. He received a unanimous call in 1869 from the South Baptist Church of Newark, New Jersey, to help heal a divided church.[37] Having effected the healing by 1872, a new call came from the South Baptist Church of New York City, but Dowling declined due to his age (sixty-five) and declining health. Still, he did what he could to help this church for the next year, though without the title of pastor.[38] In all, Dowling's pastoral ministry spanned some forty-six years, plus time as a licentiate in England. Occasionally he returned to Berean to fill their pulpit, as well as other Baptist pulpits, as invitations came to him. John Dowling finally laid aside his earthly ministry on July 4, 1878, in Middletown, New York.

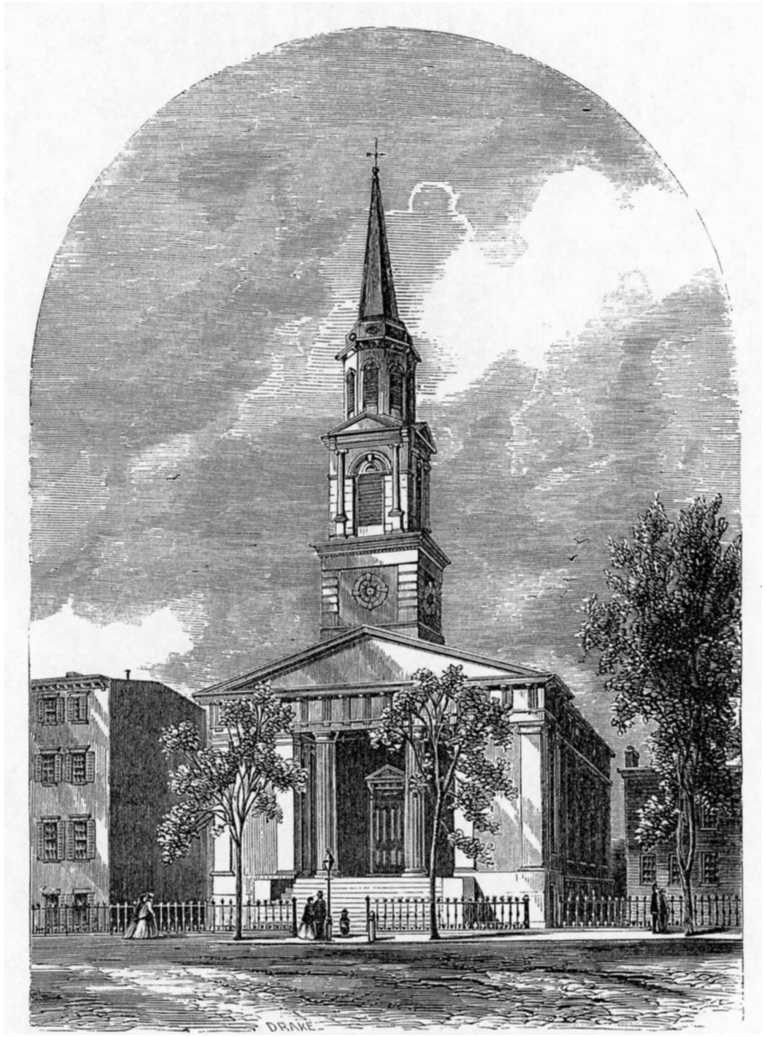
the Baptist historian, who served from 1852-1863. Robert Stuart MacArthur (1841-1923) pastored from 1870-1911. The fundamentalist John Roach Straton (1875-1929) was there from 1918-1929, making the church a center for New York fundamentalism. William Ward Ayer (1892-1985), first president of the National Religious Broadcasters, led the assembly from 1936-1949. Stephen Olford (1918-2004), the prominent evangelical writer and leader, served as the senior minister from 1959-1973. [Hope Chapel was later renamed Broadway Baptist, and in 1854, Calvary Baptist. For more, see William R. De Plata, *Tell It from Calvary: The record of a sustained Gospel witness from Calvary Baptist Church of New York City since 1847*. New York, NY: Calvary Baptist Church, 1972 —*Ed*.]

[35] Formerly known as Sansom Street Baptist, this church started in January of 1811, calling William Staughton as its first pastor a month later. David Spencer, *The Early Baptists of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: William Syckelmoore, 1878), 178.

[36] *Baptist Missionary Magazine* (Boston: Missionary Rooms), 36 (1856), No. 1 (Jan.): 22.

[37] The church had started in 1850 out of First Baptist Church with 37 members. Dowling was preceded by Edgar M. Levy, 1858-1869, and was followed by George A. Peltz, 1872-1876. See *A History of the City of Newark, New Jersey* (New York: Lewis Historical Pub., 1913), 2: 989.

[38] Williams, *Earthly Paths*, 17.



The South Baptist Church building, Newark, New Jersey, as it appeared during John Dowling's ministry there from 1869 to 1872.

Denominational activities

Throughout his long career, Dowling was busy looking after his various churches, but he also participated widely in denominational life. In his early pastoral days, he became active in the Hudson River Association. The Association's Minutes for 1833 show Dowling at the annual meeting representing the Catskill church. In 1833, Dowling also spoke out against slavery, then threatening the stability of the American Baptist work. Baptists were on both sides of the issue, but Northerners tended to oppose slavery. As a recent immigrant from England, Dowling had enjoyed a long association with Joseph Ivimey, a prominent London pastor and supporter of the abolitionist movement on the British scene. Ivimey's views doubtless contributed to Dowling's own opposition to slavery.[39] Dowling had occasion to address a small gathering of the New England Anti-Slavery Society and spoke in sympathy with efforts to end slavery when given the opportunity.[40]

In 1845, Dowling was still speaking out on abolition whenever he could. He participated in the anti-slavery discussions at the November meeting of the General Missionary (Triennial) Convention held at Philadelphia. He went on record as favoring its abolishment, indicating he was an active member of the American Anti-Slavery Society.[41] Additionally, as a member of the American Baptist Home Mission Society, Dowling publicly declared himself as opposing the appointment of slaveholders as missionaries. "As much as I love the American Baptist Home Mission Society," he said, "I cannot consent to have a seat on its Board at the sacrifice of my conscience. I can never hold up my hand in favor of employing a slaveholder as a missionary."[42] It was this very position—refusal to appoint slaveholders as missionaries—that sundered the Baptist unity in

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[39] An example of Ivimey's abolitionist views may be seen in his 1832 pamphlet, *The Utter Extinction of Slavery an Object of Scripture Prophecy.* London: George Wightman.

[40] Letter from Arnold Buffum to the Board of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, *The Liberator,* October 5, 1833, 158.

[41] Rufus Babcock, Jr., John O. Choules and John M. Peck, eds., *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record* (New York: John R. Bigelow), 4 (1845), No. 12 (Dec.): 354.

[42] Quoted in Mary E. D. Trowbridge, *Baptists of Michigan* (N.p.: Published under the Auspices of the Michigan Baptist State Convention, 1909), 99.

North America that year.[43]

Abolitionism was perhaps the most significant of Dowling's denominational contributions, but he regularly and widely contributed to denominational life at multiple other levels. In 1838, he attended the Triennial Convention held at the Oliver Street Baptist Church, New York, where he served on a committee that oversaw the publications of the Convention.[44] In 1842, Dowling participated in the American and Foreign Bible Society's fifth annual meeting at First Baptist of New York on April 26. Dowling worked on a committee to nominate officers and managers for the following year.[45] He took an active role in the American Baptist Home Mission Society's meeting, also held at First Baptist later in the afternoon of that same day.[46] Dowling attended the recognition services for two new Rhode Island churches in 1842. On August 11th, the Quidnessett Baptist Church was constituted, with Dowling preaching the dedication sermon from Haggai 2:7.[47] And he attended the recognition service for Second Baptist Church of Hopkinton, preaching from Psalm 147:2-3.[48]

Dowling's history with the American Baptist Home Mission Society (A.B.H.M.S.) was long and deep. As seen earlier, he was supported by the Board in its early days as one of its first missionaries. Later, he served on its board of managers and participated regularly in its various meetings. He is listed as a director for life in 1843, after his church at Providence contributed the requisite $100 to the Society for this to occur.[49] He stepped

[43] For a summary of North American Baptists and slavery, see Jeff Straub, "The Legality of Slavery in the Sight of God: Baptists and Their Use of Titus 2 to Defend Slavery," *The Journal of Baptist Studies*, 5 (2013): 36-63.

[44] "Meeting of the Ninth Triennial Convention," *The Baptist Missionary Magazine* (Boston: John Putnam), 18 (1838), No. 6 (June): 127.

[45] *Baptist Memorial*, 1 (1842), No. 5 (May): 146.

[46] *Ibid*., 150.

[47] J. R. Cole, *History of Washington and Kent Counties, Rhode Island* (New York: W. W. Preston, 1889), 434.

[48] *Baptist Memorial*, 1 (1842), No. 2 (Feb.): 64.

[49] *The Eleventh Annual Report of the American Baptist Home Mission Society* (New York: American Baptist Home Mission Rooms, 1843), 73.

down from the Board in 1850, but was still a member for life.[50] Dowling served on the executive board of the A.B.H.M.S. on three separate occasions over the course of his life, 1837-1839, 1844-1850, and 1861-1862.[51]

At the seventh annual gathering of the Publication Society, which met at Fifth Baptist in Philadelphia on April 29, 1846, Dowling preached the anniversary sermon from Matthew 11:2-5. Several weeks later, at a special meeting of the same society, at First Baptist of Brooklyn, he offered this resolution:

> *Resolved,* That in the publication of the valuable works of standard Baptist literature, the Board of this Society are performing a work of vast importance to the prosperity and growth of our denomination, and one which deserves the sincere gratitude, and should claim the liberal co-operation of every American Baptist. Carried unanimously.[52]

Also in 1846, Dowling participated in the first anniversary of the American Baptist Society for Evangelizing the Jews. He went on record declaring, "it ought to affect our hearts, the Lord of life, he on whom our hearts rest, was a Jew. Oh, let us not neglect this people, the kindred and brethren of Him who now sits enthroned in glory."[53]

In early January of the following year, he attended the ordination of D. F. Twiss to the pulpit of First Baptist Church of Wantage, New Jersey, and preached the ordination sermon.[54] The year 1848 opened with Dowling in Danbury, Connecticut, where he delivered a sermon on January 6th at the dedication of that church. Just prior to this he had preached on December 23, 1847,

[50] *Eighteenth Report of the American Baptist Home Mission Society* (New York: American Baptist Home Mission Rooms, 1850), 11.

[51] *American Baptist Home Missions* (1883), 548.

[52] Rufus Babcock, Jr., John O. Choules and John M. Peck, eds., *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record* (New York: John R. Bigelow), 5 (1846), No. 6 (June): 178-179.

[53] "The Jews," *The Christian Secretary* (Hartford, CT), 29 (1846), May 29: 1.

[54] Cf. George Love, et al., *History of the First Baptist Church of Wantage, Sussex [County], New Jersey* (typescript copy, 1955), iii.

at Parksville, Sullivan County, also at a church dedication.[55] The following spring, Dowling addressed the annual gathering of the American and Foreign Bible Society meeting in May 1848 at Spencer Cone's First Baptist Church in New York.[56]

In 1849, he presided over the formal recognition service of the Strong Place Baptist Church of New York City on April 18th and preached the sermon.[57] He also served as the moderator at the annual meeting of the New York Baptist Association, which met at Sixteenth Baptist of New York City on May 29.[58] In 1851, Dowling held the office of president of the Pennsylvania Baptist Education Society,[59] and in 1855, he served as moderator of the Philadelphia Association. In 1863, representing the Berean Baptist Church of New York, Dowling was at the forty-ninth annual assembly of the American Baptist Missionary Union (formerly the General Missionary Convention), meeting in Cleveland, Ohio. He served on a committee on the state of the country and presented a motion to the Union that was accepted.[60]

It seems that when it came to denominational life, Dowling made his presence felt at multiple levels and showed an energy that seemed inexhaustible. But denominational life and local church ministry would not be the only areas in which he labored. He also found the time to work outside the Baptist cause in the larger Protestant world, as the next section will demonstrate.

Roman Catholicism

One of the particularly interesting aspects of John Dowling's activities while in New York City was his participation in

[55] Enoch Hutchinson, ed., *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record* (New York: Martyn, Ely and Co.), 7 (1848), No. 2 (Feb.): 64.

[56] *Ibid.*, No. 6 (June): 199.

[57] Cf. *Thirty-Third Anniversary of Strong Place Baptist Church, Brooklyn* (New York: Livingston Middleditch, 1882), 16.

[58] "New York [Association]," Orrin B. Judd, ed., *The New York Chronicle* (New York: Holman and Gray), 1 (1849), No. 8 (Aug.): 210.

[59] J. Lansing Burrows, ed., *American Baptist Register, for 1852* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1853), 297.

[60] "American Baptist Missionary Union," *The Missionary Magazine*, (Boston: Missionary Rooms), 43 (1863), No. 7 (July): 194, 208, 214.

interdenominational efforts. While at West Baptist, Dowling had attended as a Baptist a meeting of the Christian Union Association. Other participants included Alexander V. Griswold, a Methodist, Asa Mahan of Oberlin College, and Dr. Skinner, a Presbyterian. In his address, Dowling emphasized the basis upon which such a union should be undertaken. Christian union could not result in the giving up of one's denominational identity. The goal is not to make Methodists into Baptists or Baptists into Methodists, but "to unite all in one, just so far as we can go together, and no further." Second, the terms of such a union cannot mean that one would renounce any doctrinal conviction. Third, this union cannot mean the abandonment of any practice that entails from doctrinal conviction. "The only practicable ground of Union is, that churches of various denominations should unite together and agree to walk together and cooperate, just so far as their conscientious principles will permit."[61]

One area of participation Dowling was willing to engage in was evangelizing Roman Catholics. The 1840's was the time of the great Irish potato famine in which about one million Irish died when their annual potato harvest, then the main staple of their diet, was decimated by several years of blight. The Irish began an immigration flood into the United States that saw approximately 1.6 million enter, mostly through New York, in the fifteen-year period between 1841 to 1855.[62]

Protestants, concerned about the growing influence of Roman Catholicism in the United States, began to organize anti-Roman Catholic organizations. This was especially the case for those of European origin like John Dowling, who had seen the heavy hand of Roman Catholicism up close and personal. One such group was the American Protestant Society, begun in 1844. Dowling was active in this group from the beginning, as he delivered an address entitled, "The Unchangeable Character of Popery, a Reason for Watchfulness against the advances of Rome," at its first anniversary meeting on May 8, 1845.[63] The Berean Baptist Church, of

[61] "Meeting for Christian Union," *New York Evangelist*, Jan. 7, 1837, 1.

[62] See D. A. E. Harkness, "Irish Immigration," in Walter F. Wilcox, ed., *International Migrations*, *Volume 2: Interpretations* (National Bureau of Economic Research, 1931), 231-282. Available online. Accessed March 16, 2017.

[63] Cf. *The American Protestant Magazine* (New York: American Protestant

which Dowling was a pastor, gave $13.35 so that their pastor could become a life member of this society.[64] He also spoke at the fourth anniversary assembly on May 13, 1847, at the Scottish Presbyterian Church of New York. In response to the reading of a report on the state and threat of popery, Dowling rose and spontaneously addressed the gathering, proposing that the report be printed.[65]

The American Protestant Society (A.P.S.) existed from 1844-1849 and then merged with two other organizations, The Christian Alliance (1842-1849) and The Foreign Evangelical Society (1839-1849), to become the American and Foreign Christian Union (A.F.C.U.). Dowling was active in these societies from the founding of the A.P.S. in 1844 until at least 1853, when he, as a Philadelphia pastor, addressed the A.F.C.U. meeting in Baltimore at the Protestant Methodist Episcopal Church.[66] Dowling was listed as a member of the Board of Directors of the A.F.C.U. in 1849.[67]

As a part of his work for the A.P.S., Dowling edited and wrote an introduction for a reprint of *Dr. Middleton's Letter from Rome, showing an exact Conformity between Popery and Paganism.*[68] Conyers Middleton (1683-1750) was an Anglican clergyman who visited Rome and wrote about his observations in 1729, proposing that Rome had adopted pagan rituals for many of its customs. Dowling also wrote *A History of Romanism*, which saw more than 30,000 copies printed.[69] In 1849, Dowling wrote a supplement

Society), 1 (1845-1846), No. 2 (July 1845): 37-44.

[64] *Ibid*., No. 10 (Mar. 1846): 319.

[65] For Dowling's comments, see *American Protestant Magazine*, 2 (1847-1848), No. 1 (June 1847): 2-8.

[66] Cf. *American and Foreign Christian Union*, February 1854, 94.

[67] Cf. *American Protestant Magazine,* 3 (1849-1850), No. 2 (July 1849): 60. For a brief summary of the A.P.S. and the A.F.C.U., see "History of the American and Foreign Christian Union," available online. Accessed March 15, 2017.

[68] For the introduction, see *Letter from Rome* (New York: American Protestant Society, 1847), v-xxx. Dowling edited this work of Middleton on behalf of the A.P.S. Cf. *American Protestant Magazine,* 1 (1845-1846), No. 10 (Mar. 1846): 318.

[69] New York: Edward Walker, 1845. A second edition was published in 1870 that saw the work expanded from 671 pages to 932 pages. On the estimated number of books in print, see Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopedia,*

focusing on the life of Pope Pius IX for the seventeenth edition (printing) of *History of Romanism*.[70]

In 1851, Dowling made a visit to Montreal in the heart of Roman Catholic Canada, following which he wrote about his observations.[71] Several years later, he translated *Un mot passant à ceux qui ont abandonné l'Église Romaine et ses traditions*, by Cyrile H. O. Côté.[72] Côté was a Canadian doctor and a member of the legislative assembly of Lower Canada who was raised as a Roman Catholic. He was exiled in the United States after an insurrection of which he was a leader in 1837 and 1838, and was converted in June of 1841. During his post-conversion life, he was active in proclaiming the Gospel and in the work of the Grand Ligne Mission of Canada. He was especially burdened to evangelize Roman Catholics.[73]

In Dowling's activities with the A.P.S. and A.F.C.U., his work as an author became increasingly more significant. It was indicative of this aspect of his life—his use of the pen. It is to this final aspect of Dowling's life to which this essay now turns.

Prodigious author

John Dowling seemed to be an indefatigable man. In addition to his numerous pastoral and denominational activities, and his labors on behalf of Protestantism, he also found the time to have an extensive writing career. His efforts to combat Roman Catholicism in print has already been noted. But Dowling had other interests that occupied his pen as well.

344. The Supplement on Pius IX was also available separately.

[70] New York: Edward Walker, 1849.

[71] "Observations on Popery as seen in a Visit to Montreal," Enoch Hutchinson, ed., *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record* (New York: Z. P. Hatch), 10 (1851), No. 9 (Sept.): 281-288.

[72] Published in 1853 as *A Word in Passing, to those who have abandoned the church of Rome and her traditions*. This may be found in *Baptist Pamphlets* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, n. d.), with Dowling comments (3-4). This is the first such volume of miscellaneous pamphlets and is numbered either 1 or A when referenced.

[73] On Côté, see Richard Chabot, "Côté, Cyrile-Hector-Octave," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, 7:208-211, or Narcisse Cyr, *Memoir of the Rev. C. H. O. Cote, M. D.* Philadelphia: A.B.P.S., n.d.

Prodigious is the best term to describe this activity. From his early days in England as an educator and throughout his American pastoral career, Dowling's pen was seldom idle. As an educator, he composed three books that had wide use in England.[74] Once he settled into life in America, he took up his pen again and began what would become a steady stream of writing that ranged widely, from controversial literature to historical writing to devotional material, including poetry and hymnody. Oft times, men who produced the sheer volume of written materials on the scale of Dowling had their sermons stenographically recorded, which were then published. C. H. Spurgeon is an example of this. But Dowling seems to have continually written original material, without the use of a secretary or stenographer.[75] For a time, he even served as an editor for a major denominational periodical.[76]

Controversial literature. In 1838, soon after commencing ministry in America, Dowling entered the debate on the accuracy in Bible translation, when he wrote an essay arguing for the correct translation of the Greek word βαπτίζω (baptizo). Dowling, as pastor of West Baptist of New York, represented the church at the Bible Convention which met at Philadelphia on April 26, 1837, to discuss the duty of the denomination, especially as it related to Bible translation and distribution.[77] One of the issues at stake was the proper mode of *baptism* as immersion and not sprinkling. The mistranslation of βαπτίζω was "perverting the ordinance of Baptism, and establishing in its place to a wide extent, *Infant Sprinkling*, which the learned and venerable Gill has justly called 'a part and pillar of popery.' "[78]

[74] Hutchinson, "John Dowling," 108.

[75] This is an argument largely from silence; however, there is no indication in the extant historical record of John Dowling that he had any significant help in his voluminous writing.

[76] It was announced in late 1851, that Dowling would join the editorial staff of *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record*, 10 (1851), No. 12 (Dec.): 403. Dowling's editorial work would be short lived. His name appears as the editor of *The Baptist Memorial* in January of 1852, but by June of that year he resigned his labors due to a heavy pastoral work load: though it did not stop his pen from further usefulness. Cf. *Baptist Memorial*, 11 (1852), Nos. 1 (Jan.): 22 and 7 (July): 234.

[77] *Proceedings of the Bible Convention* (New York: James Gray, 1837), 5.

[78] Spencer Cone, address before the Bible Convention, April 21, 1837, in *ibid*., 18.

Dowling entered into this discussion when the charge of ultra-sectarianism was leveled against the Baptists. "In the Baptist denomination, a large portion of…[their] ministry and membership cannot even unite with other Christians in furnishing the Bible to heathen nations in their own language, unless the word *immerce* [sic] is substituted for *baptize*, where it occurs in the English translation."[79] Dowling wished not merely to answer this scurrilous accusation, but to put before his Baptist brethren an apologetic for the work of Baptist Bible translators like "the sainted Carey," Judson, Yates and Marshman, "who have adhered literally to the commands of the great Head of the church in reference to an ordinance of his own appointment."[80] Contrary to Reese's accusation that it was the Baptists who refused to cooperate unless in every case the word *immerse* was used of the ordinance, it was really the Pedobaptists who insisted that the word βαπτίζω be left untranslated, even in translations made by Baptists. The Baptists felt they had to withdraw from the united effort of the American Bible Society to be true to their principles and true to the Word of God. For these Baptists, "it would be unjust to the heathen to conceal the meaning of any word in the inspired record, by leaving it untranslated." Moreover, they had no right to obscure "what Christ made clear." Such action would violate their loyalty to the Master.[81]

Dowling was active in the work of the American and Foreign Bible Society. He addressed their eleventh annual meeting in 1848.[82] Spencer Cone and William H. Wyckoff in the *New York*

[79] David M. Reese, *The Humbugs of New York being a Remonstrance against Popular Delusion whether in Science, Philosophy, or Religion* (New York: John B. Taylor, 1838), 253.

[80] John Dowling, *A vindication of the Baptists from the charge of bigotry and of embarrassing missionary operations: by translating and refusing to transfer in all their versions of the scriptures among the heathen the words relating to baptism* (New York: J. P. Calendar, 1838), 4. Dowling went on for another sixteen pages offering further reasons why the Baptists formed their own Bible society.

[81] *Ibid*., 6, 12, 14. Dowling listed examples of other words which were left untranslated.

[82] *Eleventh Annual Report of the American and Foreign Bible Society* (New York: John Gray, 1848), 38-45.

Chronicle in February 1849 had written a statement defending an upcoming revision of the common English version (K.J.V.). In 1850, Dowling participated at another meeting of the American and Foreign Bible Society to protest the revision of the common version. This meeting was held at Oliver Street Baptist, Thursday, April 4, 1850. When the A.F.B.S. was established, it was argued, they agreed to reproduce the "common" version. However, opinions had changed. Dowling presided and Isaac E. Taylor served as secretary. Seventy-seven Baptist leaders attended. Dowling was part of a committee appointed to draw up a reply rejecting the need for a revised version.[83] At issue was not simply the question of how to translate βαπτίζω. It was also a question about the competency of the translators.[84] Dowling also delivered his views on the subject before his congregation at Hope Chapel.[85] In this discourse, he surveyed the history of the discussion, going back to the founding of the American and Foreign Bible Society in 1836. One of the founding principles upon which a new version would be translated by the A.F.B.S. was conformity to the common version.[86] Moreover, the Society agreed in 1838 that the English version distributed by the Society would be the common version "until otherwise directed by the Society."[87] In 1849, at a hastily called meeting, this commitment was removed. When word got out, other members of the Society not present challenged the decision. In 1850, Spencer Cone, president of the Society, and William H. Wyckoff, corresponding secretary, supervised a new version of the New Testament which rendered βαπτίζω as *immerse*. Dowling hoped to persuade other Baptists that this was a bad idea.[88]

[83] Cf. *An Argument Sustaining the Common Version of the Bible.* New York: John Gray, 1850.

[84] *Ibid*., 18.

[85] *"The Old-Fashioned Bible," or Ten Reasons against the Proposed Baptist Version of the New Testament: A discourse delivered at Hope Chapel, Broadway, March 31, 1850*. New York: Edward Fletcher, 1850.

[86] *Ibid*., iii.

[87] *Ibid*., iv-v.

[88] Dowling defended the common version before his congregation in "The English Bible as it is: a discourse in favor of King James's Version of the Scriptures; delivered Sunday evening, March 31, 1850, in Hope-Chapel, New-York." New York: n. p. 1850.

To do this, he listed ten reasons against a new English translation done by Baptists. First, this new version would be viewed by others as denominationally motivated, "as a denominational act." Second, it would bring down opprobrium upon the members of the Society. Third, it would violate their own assurances to the contrary—that they would use the common version exclusively for their English translation. Fourth, "The word Baptize is to all intents and purposes an English word." Fifth, a new translation would be an admission that Baptists cannot sustain themselves with the present translation. Sixth, Baptists actually can sustain themselves with the common version. Seventh, by offering a new version, Baptists lose the advantage of meeting the Pedobaptists on their own ground. Eighth, it would mean surrendering the word to the sprinklers and pourers. Ninth, it would mean the abandonment of the *Baptist* name. Tenth, it would further the divide between Baptists and other believers.[89]

Dowling's pamphlet was answered by James Cole, point by point.[90] A summary of these objections is all that is needed here. First, of course, if the Society produced a corrected version, it would be a denominational act, but why would there be odium attached if the Baptists merely follow their own principles?—unless it can be demonstrated that this was forced upon the Society. Second, the Baptists were not creating their own Bible, they were merely correctly translating the text. Third, yes, it was true that the Society agreed to circulate the common version "until otherwise ordered." Fourth, while *baptize* might be a true English word, "the common people would not have been satisfied with the change to sprinkling."[91] Cole handled the other six objections of Dowling in a similar fashion.

It was an interesting debate. Cone and Wyckoff did produce their version.[92] But the "Baptist version" never really caught on

[89] *Ibid*., 14, 15, 17, 20, 24, 26, 29, 32, 34.

[90] *Review of a Discourse by Rev. John Dowling, D. D. Entitled The English Bible as It Is, in which Ten Objections urged by him against a corrected version are separately considered*. New York: Holman and Gray, 1850.

[91] *Ibid*., 6-10.

[92] Spencer Cone and William Wyckoff, eds. *The Commonly Received Version of the New Testament. . .with Several Hundred Emendations*. New York: E. H. Tripp, 1851.

and the debate continues. Eventually the common version would be updated, but the Baptists would not see a widely-used translation that rendered βαπτίζω as *immerse*. Even the most recent effort by Baptists, the Southern Baptist Convention's *Holman Christian Standard Bible*, while updating the text into contemporary English, retained the common practice of trans-literating (instead of translating) the Greek word βαπτίζω.

A large portion of Dowling's controversial literature was the previously-mentioned material on Roman Catholicism. To this category could be added yet another treatise on the Protestant versus the Roman Catholic Bible. Dowling wrote *The Burning of Bibles* in response to a letter from Father John Corry in the *Providence Journal* on January 9, 1841, that justified the burning by Roman Catholics of Bibles that had been mass distributed by Protestants to the Catholics on the grounds that the translations were unfaithful to truth. On the one hand, Corry tried to assert that no such burning took place; while on the other, he suggested that even if it did, it was necessary to protect the Roman Catholic faithful. Dowling responded to Corry by arguing that the Douay version, for example, was not actually a translation properly so-called, but a "translation of a translation," being a translation into English from the Latin Vulgate. Dowling showed the deficiencies of the Douay translation—such as *metanoeo* being rendered as *penance* in Matthew 3:2 and Luke 17:3, etc. Dowling then defended the superiority of the King James Version over the Douay. He concluded with a brief summary of various Roman persecutions of Protestants such as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572, to further demonstrate the mindset of Romanism.[93]

Another storm in American Christianity in which Dowling was involved was the Adventist movement. Trouble erupted when William Miller (1782-1849), an erstwhile Baptist, began to suggest a particular time when Jesus would return. Miller worked out a theory, based on Daniel 8:14, which placed Jesus' return on or before an 1844 deadline. Miller first began to promote his views in a series of essays in the *Vermont Telegraph*, a Baptist newspaper.

[93] John Dowling, *The Burning of Bibles: A Defence of the Protestant Version of Scripture against Popish Apologists for the Champlain Bible Burners.* Philadelphia: Nathan Moore, 1843. A summary of the incident in question which allegedly took place in Champlain is recounted in the introduction to the small book.

Demand for an explanation of his ideas led to the publication of a book in 1833.[94] This movement, labeled Millerism, inaugurated what would later become Adventism. Dowling responded to this novel theology with a detailed examination of Miller's views.[95] Miller's answers to Dowling's critiques were then published in 1842 by Joshua Himes, a follower of William Miller.[96] Dowling's refutation was also answered by Josiah Litch, a Methodist Episcopal itinerant who embraced Millerism.[97] Miller's theory ultimately proved false when Jesus did not return as predicted. But the movement which he began changed, and today there are nearly twenty million adherents to some form of Adventism.[98]

Practical literature. Dowling's writings on controversial topics comprise the largest category of his works, but they are hardly the only type of material which he produced. Another category of literary output is what might broadly be called practical literature. This category includes Dowling's work as a hymnist and hymn-book editor, as well as his homiletical helps, and devotional literature.

First, Dowling was a hymnist and hymnbook editor. Two different editions of his hymnbook were published in his lifetime—*Conference Hymns* published in 1849 and dedicated to his first four churches—Catskill, Second Baptist, Pine Street and Berean.[99]

[94] William Miller, *Evidences from Scripture and History of the Second Coming of Christ about the Year A.D. 1843*. Brandon, VT: Vermont Telegraph, 1833.

[95] *An Exposition of the Prophecies Supposed by William Miller to Predict the Second Coming of Christ in 1843*. Providence: George Daniels, 1840, and New York: J. R. Bigelow, 1842. A lengthy review of this work may be found in Rufus Babcock, Jr., John O. Choules and John M. Peck, eds., *The Baptist Memorial* (New York: John R. Bigelow), 3 (1844), No. 6 (June): 184-188.

[96] Joshua V. Himes, *Views of the Prophecies and Prophetic Chronology selected from the Manuscripts of William Miller with a Memoir of his Life.* Boston: Joshua Himes, 1842.

[97] Josiah Litch, *Refutation of "Dowling's Reply to Miller" on the Second Coming of Christ in 1843*. Boston: Joshua V. Himes, 1842.

[98] For a current examination of Miller and his views, see David L. Rowe, *God's Strange Work: William Miller and the End of the World*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2008.

[99] *Conference Hymns: A New Collection of Hymns designed especially for*

Seven of the hymns were written by Dowling and four others altered by him. This hymnal is the first American hymnal to contain the beloved hymn "Sweet Hour of Prayer," which first appeared in the *New York Observer* on September 13, 1845.[100] Dowling's hymn, "Children of Zion! what harp-notes are stealing," was a regular in hymnbooks since at least 1836.[101] About twenty years later, Dowling reissued a revised version of the hymnbook, containing fifty new songs that had been written since the publication of the first edition, including "Just As I Am" and "Jesus Paid It All."[102]

Another contribution by Dowling to practical literature is his book on sermon illustration, which he originally delivered as a series of lectures at the New Hampton Theological Institution in 1847.[103] Dowling also wrote *Nights of Weeping and Mornings of Joy; or, Words of Comfort Addressed to Those Who are Sowing in Tears and Shall Reap in Joy.*[104]

Historical literature. One final category that came from the pen of John Dowling was historical literature. Much of his controversial writing on Roman Catholicism would fit under this heading, but his historical work was not limited to these controversial pieces. Dowling wrote several essays that were published in the *Baptist*

use in Conference and Prayer Meetings, and Family Devotions. New York: Edward Fletcher, 1849.

[100] David W. Music and Paul A. Richardson, *I Will Sing the Wondrous Story: A History of Baptist Hymnody in North America* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 222. Also on Dowling, see Henry S. Burrage, *Baptist Hymn Writers and Their Hymns* (Portland, ME: Brown Thurston, 1888), 317-318.

[101] Dowling attributes this hymn to himself in his 1849 hymnal (no. 46). It may be found in a number of other hymnals published around this time, though without identifying its author. The earliest hymnbook which I have found which contains this hymn is in *Sacred Melodies for Conference and Prayer Meetings for Social and Private Devotion* (Dover, NH: Trustees of the Freewill Baptist Convention, 1836), no. 96.

[102] *Conference Hymns: A New Edition Revised and Improved by the Addition of New Revival and Conference Hymns*. New York: U. D. Ward, 1868.

[103] *The Power of Illustration: An Element of Success in Preaching and Teaching*. New York: Lewis Colby and Co., 1848.

[104] New York: Edward Fletcher, 1852.

Memorial (New York) and elsewhere that may be subsumed under this heading. These include his editing of a tribute to the American Baptist hero, Adoniram Judson. *The Judson Offering* is part history, part commemoration of Judson's visit to the United States, part mission biography, part inspiration, and part devotional writing.[105] At least 13,000 copies were published by 1850. "This book is the frame-work of the history of the Burmah mission, interlaced and entwined with blossoms and fragrances of some of the choicest effusions of poetry."[106] It consists of a series of historical sketches on aspects or events from Judson's life, some written by Dowling, interspersed with poetical selections of a devotional nature.

In 1846, Dowling wrote a brief description of the death of Jacob Thomas, missionary to Assam.[107] Later he would write an introduction to a biographical sketch of Thomas's life.[108] Thomas and a colleague, Miles Bronson, went to Assam in 1836 under the appointment of the American Baptists. Thomas was traveling by river to reach Sadiya, their appointed ministry destination, without Bronson, who had become ill. Thomas went on alone, hoping to secure medicine to assist the ailing Bronson. He was within eye-sight of his final destination, when a pair of trees dislodged from the bank of the river by the current, fell into the water at the precise time Thomas's boat passed, striking the boat and causing Thomas to drown.[109] Dowling records the final entry in Thomas's diary, written on his final "Sabbath" (Sunday) on earth. Thomas's entry was a typical expression of dedication of the men and women who went to the far-reaches of the world with the Gospel—"Employ me in doing something to promote thy glory on earth, and let me be eternally engaged in thy service."[110]

[105] *The Judson Offering* (Editor). New York: Lewis Colby and Co., 1846.

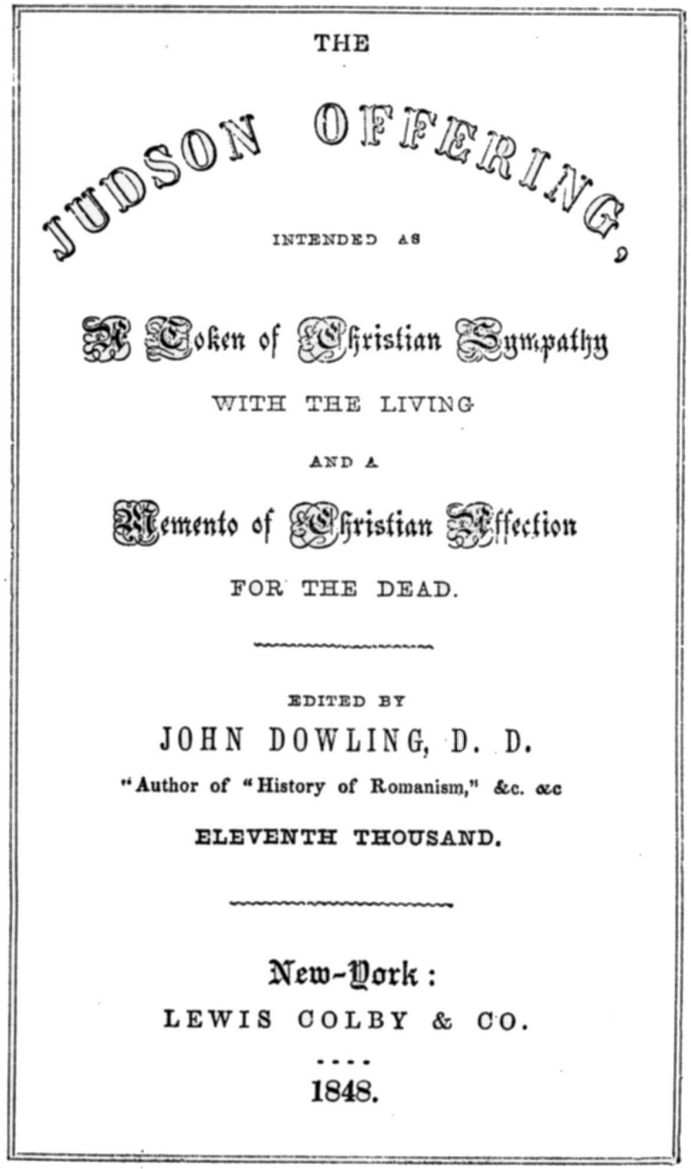
[106] Advertisement in *Christian Secretary*, Dec. 28, 1849, 4.

[107] "Almost There or A Missionary's Death," *The Missionary Memorial* (New York: E Walker, 1846), 146-154.

[108] S. M. Fuller Harris, *Memoir of the Rev. Jacob Thomas, Missionary to Assam* (New York: Edward Fletcher, 1850).

[109] Henry C. Mabie, "Beginnings of the Work in Assam and the Early Missionaries," *Baptist Missionary Magazine*, 81 (1901), No. 6 (June): 207-208.

[110] Dowling, "A Missionary's Death," 53.


THE

JUDSON OFFERING,

INTENDED AS

A Token of Christian Sympathy

WITH THE LIVING

AND A

Memento of Christian Affection

FOR THE DEAD.

EDITED BY

JOHN DOWLING, D. D.

"Author of "History of Romanism," &c. &c

ELEVENTH THOUSAND.

New-York:

LEWIS COLBY & CO.

1848.

Facsimile of the original title page to John Dowling's *The Judson Offering* (1848 edition).

Dowling also wrote a series of historical essays for publication in *The Baptist Memorial* in 1849. He appears to have been gearing up to take over the editorship of this journal which he would assume several years later. Hence, he wrote a "New Year's Address" to the readership, which led the journal at the beginning of the year.[111]

His first essay in the series describes the beginning of the Berean Baptist Church (1838), the church at which he was currently the pastor. He also recorded the fruits of a revival that took place in 1840.[112] The remaining four essays were various sketches on New York Baptist history, including a history of the First and Oliver Street Baptist Churches, a history on the colored Baptist churches, a bit of biography on Thomas Paul, the famous black Baptist preacher, and a summary of the successes of the second quarter century for New York Baptists.[113]

Finally, Dowling also contributed several introductions for other important treatises. His 1847 introduction to Middleton's *Letter from Rome* has already been mentioned, as has the introduction to the biography of Jacob Thomas. In 1849, he wrote an introduction to a life of Lorenzo Dow (1777-1834), the famous but eccentric, Methodist revivalist preacher.[114] In 1850, he composed an introduction to Baptist W. Noel (1798-1873), *Essay on Christian Baptism*, taking exception to Noel's open communion views.[115] And in 1856, Dowling wrote an introduction to D. C.

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[111] John Dowling, "A New Year's Address," in Enoch Hutchinson and Stephen Remington, eds., *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record* (New York: Z. P. Hatch), 8 (1849), No. 1 (Jan.): 3-7.

[112] John Dowling, "Sketch of the Origin and First Revival of the Berean Baptist Church," *Baptist Memorial*, 8 (1849), No. 2 (Feb): 47-54.

[113] Cf. John Dowling, "Sketches of New York Baptists, No. II: A Hundred Years Ago. The Origin of the First Baptist Church, New York," *Baptist Memorial*, 8 (1849), No. 4 (Apr.): 111-118; "Sketches of New York Baptists, No. III: Oliver Street Baptist Church," *ibid*., No. 5 (May): 144-151; "Sketches of New York Baptists, No. IV: Rev. Tho[mas] Paul and the Colored Baptist Churches," *ibid*., No. 9 (Sept.): 295-301; "Sketches of New York Baptists, No. V: Second Quarter of the Nineteenth Century," *ibid*., No. 12 (Dec.): 390-394.

[114] *The Dealings of God, Man, and the Devil: as Exemplified in the Life, Experience and Travels of Lorenzo Dow.* New York: Nafish and Cornish, 1849.

[115] New York: Edward Fletcher, 1850.

Haynes, *The Baptist Denomination: Its History, Doctrine and Ordinances*.[116]

Neither Dowling nor his pen ever seemed to rest. Perhaps his final public ministry was a sermon in 1877, "Humility as an Element of Ministerial Character" delivered before the New York Baptist Pastors' Conference in the fall of 1877.[117] His literary attainments brought him considerable notoriety among fellow Baptists. In 1834, Brown University, under the presidency of Francis Wayland, conferred an honorary Master of Arts on him and in 1846, he received the D.D. from Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, under President Henry B. Bascom.[118] He was widely known and respected among his fellows for his life and work.

[116] New York: Sheldon, Blakeman, 1856. Several other pieces of Dowling's writing may be found scattered in the historical record. In 1847, he wrote "The Last of the Bards and the Kings of Wales," *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record* (New York: John R. Bigelow), 6 (1847), No. 6 (June): 168-176. In 1849, a sermon that Dowling preached at Berean (Bedford St.) Baptist Church was phonographically recorded, then a novelty. Cf. "Vain Boasting of Infidelity," *Baptist Memorial,* 8 (1849), No. 3 (Mar.): 88-92.

In 1851, "Missionary Inquiry: A Discourse delivered before the Society of Inquiry of Madison University" (Hamilton, NY: John Fay, 1851) came from his labors. Dowling also wrote an important statement on a well-known Baptist distinctive—soul liberty. Cf. "Soul Liberty" *The Christian Review* (New York: Lewis Colby and Joseph Ballard), 18 (1853), No. 1 (Jan.): 22-50.

Finally, in 1859, he delivered a sermon before the American Bible Society subsequently published as "The Scripture te[s]timony to Jesus a reason for their universal dissemination: a sermon delivered by Rev. John Dowling, D.D., (pastor of the Berean Baptist Church, N.Y.,) before the American and Foreign Bible Society, at its annual meeting, May 12, 1859." New York: American and Foreign Bible Society, 1859.

[117] Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopedia*, 344.

[118] It was mentioned early in this essay that Dowling's education was uncertain. Given that he was awarded an honorary Master of Arts, it seems likely that if he had much formal education, he never attained Masters level training. At this time in upper education, one was awarded a degree based on what one knew, not based on years of formal classroom training. Hence Crawford H. Toy could complete his work at Southern Seminary in only one year. On Toy, see Billy G. Hurt, "Crawford Howell Toy: Interpreter of the Old Testament." Th.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., 1966.

The end of his journey

By 1878, John Dowling was reaching the end of his race. He was returning from a lecture given in Jersey City, when he fell from a sidewalk and struck his head on the cobblestone street, becoming unconscious. He suffered for weeks but seemed to be regaining his strength before he relapsed.[119] On June 14th, he showed signs of "brain disease." He was sent to the New York State Homeopathic Asylum for the Insane on June 24th and died on July 4th. The funeral took place on Sunday, July 6th, at Madison Avenue Baptist Church in New York. A. D. Gillette, William R. Williams, Reuben Jeffrey, Alfred S. Patton, Joseph F. Elder, Stephen H. Tyng, Jr., and S. B. Burchard took part.[120]

As to his character, relatively few extant comments can be found. Williams' funeral eulogy is the main source on Dowling's life, other than Hutchinson's earlier piece from 1850. One unnamed testimony to Dowling appeared in an interesting place:

> A Baptist clergyman thus describes him: 'Indomitable perseverance and untiring industry in endeavouring to do good are striking traits in Dr. Dowling's character. His preaching, when he has time to thoroughly to prepare his discourses, is ratiocinative, pathetic, and powerful. Large audiences flock to hear him. We must not omit another characteristic, which we believe to be very essential for every minister of the Gospel, and that is the remarkably kind manner in which he treats his brethren. He is always ready to take a brother by the hand, and go out of his way to introduce such a brother into a place of usefulness.'[121]

[119] "Illness of Rev. John Dowling, D. D." *New York Times*, June 25, 1878, 2.

[120] Cf. the obituary in *New York Times*, July 5, 1878, 5; and the funeral notice "Funeral of Rev. Dr. John Dowling," *New York Times*, July 8, 1878, 8. *The Baptist Home Mission Monthly*, 1 (1879), No. 3 (Mar.): 129-132, carried William R. Williams' funeral eulogy for Dowling.

[121] "John Dowling, D. D." *American Phrenological Journal*, July 1867, 18. There are practically no discoverable descriptions of Dowling's life, preaching, or personal character beyond this description. Williams' funeral eulogy has remarkably few details regarding Dowling, save the barest of details of his life.

Several things do emerge from a study of his life. Dowling's theological outlook was conservative at minimum and likely quite Calvinistic. While there is little sermon material available to investigate and almost no doctrinal essays produced by his prolific pen, Dowling associated himself with individuals who self-identified as Calvinists, starting with the illustrious Joseph Ivimey. Additionally, the wider Baptist fellowship which Dowling enjoyed was decidedly *Regular* Baptist. From the Hudson River, the Warren, and the Philadelphia Associations, all were committed to a robust Regular Baptist theology.

Second, Dowling was a denominational man. He was constantly working to strengthen Baptist work through his participation in the various societies of his day. Although not limited to association with Baptists, witness his participation in the A.F.C.U. His predominant efforts were to strengthen the Baptist cause in every way possible.

Third, Dowling was indefatigable in all that he did. This is evidenced by his wide participation in denominational life and, more importantly, in his prodigious literary output. As such, John Dowling is a wonderful exemplar of our Baptist forbearers, often unknown to us today, but upon whose shoulders we stand and from whose lives we can learn so much.

Further Reading

Enoch Hutchinson, "Biographical Sketch of Rev. John Dowling, D.D.," *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record*. New York: Zalmon P. Hatch. Volume 9 (1850), Number 4 (April), 105-114.

William R. Williams. *Earthly Paths Needing Heavenly Guidance. A Discourse on the Life and Character of the late Rev. John Dowling, Delivered before the Baptist Ministers' Conference of New York, in the House of Worship of the Oliver Street Baptist Church (Mariners' Temple), November 4, 1878.* New York: Daniel C. Potter, 1879; also published as idem., "The Rev. John Dowling," *The Baptist Home Mission Monthly.* New York: Baptist Home Mission Rooms. Volume 1 (1879), Number 3 (March), 129-132.

"John Dowling, D. D.," in J. Alexander Patten. *The Lives of the Clergy of New York and Brooklyn.* New York: Atlantic Publishing Company, 1874, 149-151.

Selected published works of John Dowling, listed chronologically:

1. *A Vindication of the Baptists from the Charge of Bigotry and of Embarrassing Missionary Operations by Translating and Refusing to Transfer in all Their Versions of the Scriptures among the Heathen, the Words relating to Baptism*. New York: J. P. Calendar, 1838. 30 pp.

2. *An Exposition of the Prophecies, Supposed by William Miller to Predict the Second Coming of Christ, in 1843.* Providence, R.I.: George P. Daniels, 1840. 232 pp.; reprinted New York: J. R. Bigelow, 1842. *With a Supplementary Chapter upon the True Scriptural Doctrine of a Millennium Prior to the Judgment*. New York: J. R. Bigelow, 1843. 47 pp.

3. *The Burning of the Bibles. Defence of the Protestant Version of the Scriptures Against the Attacks of Popish Apologists for the Champlain Bible Burners*. Philadelphia: Nathan Moore, 1843. 141 pp.

4. *The History of Romanism: from the Earliest Corruptions of Christianity to the Present Time. With Full Chronological Table, Analytical and Alphabetical Indexes and Glossary. Illustrated by Numerous Accurate and Highly Finished Engravings of Its Ceremonies, Superstitions, Persecutions, and Historical Incidents*. New York: E. Walker, 1845. 671 pp. Published in many editions to 1895.

5. (as editor) *The Judson Offering, Intended as a Token of Christian Sympathy with the Living and a Memento of Christian Affection for the Dead.* New York: Lewis Colby and Company, 1846. 288 pp.; followed by eleven more printings to 1851.

6. *The Power of Illustration. An Element of Success in Preaching and Teaching*. New York: Lewis Colby and Company, 1848. 106 pp.; reprinted 1848, 1850, 1857; New York: Sheldon and Co., 1860.

7. (Introductory essay) Peggy Dow. *The Dealings of God, Man and the Devil: as Exemplified in the Life, Experience and Travels of Lorenzo Dow*. New York: Nafish and Cornish, 1849.

8. [Sketches of New York Baptists, No. I:] "Sketch of the Origin and First Revival of the Berean Baptist Church," in Enoch Hutchinson and Stephen Remington, eds. *The Baptist Memorial and Monthly Record*. New York: Z. P. Hatch. Volume 8 (1849), Number 2 (February), 47-54; "Sketches of New York Baptists, No. II: A Hundred Years Ago. The Origin of the First Baptist Church, New York," *ibid*., Number 4 (April), 111-118; "Sketches of New York Baptists, No. III: Oliver Street Baptist Church," *ibid*., Number 5 (May), 144-151; "Sketches of New York Baptists, No. IV: Rev. Tho[mas] Paul and the Colored Baptist Churches," *ibid*., Number 9 (September), 295-301; "Sketches of New York Baptists, No. V: Second Quarter of the Nineteenth Century," *ibid*., Number 12 (December), 390-394.

9. *The Life and Reign of Pope Pius the Ninth*. New York: Edward Walker, 1849. Supplement to his *History of Romanism* and paginated 647-718.

10. *Conference Hymns: A New Collection of Hymns designed especially for use in Conference and Prayer Meetings, and Family Devotions*. New York: Edward Fletcher, 1849.

11. (Introductory essay) Baptist W. Noel. *Essay on Christian Baptism*. New York: Edward H. Fletcher, 1850.

12. (Introductory essay) Mrs. S. M. Fuller Harris. *Memoir of the Rev. Jacob Thomas, Missionary to Assam*. New York: Edward H. Fletcher, 1850.

13. "The English Bible As It Is. A Discourse in Favor of King James's Version of the Scriptures. Delivered Sunday Evening, March 31, 1850, in Hope Chapel, New York," in Orrin B. Judd, ed., *The New York Chronicle*. New York: Holman and Gray. Volume 2 (1850), Number 3 (April), 114-128; also published as *"The Old-Fashioned Bible"; or, Ten Reasons against the Proposed Baptist Version of the New Testament: A Discourse Delivered at Hope Chapel, Broadway, March 31, 1850*. New York: Edward Fletcher, 1850. 36 pp.

14. (with others) *An Argument Sustaining the Common Version of the Bible*. New York: John Gray, 1850.

15. *A New Collection of Hymns Designed Especially for Use in Conference and Prayer Meetings and Family Worship*. New York, 1850. 304 pp. reprinted New York, 1854. 292 pp.

16. *Missionary Inquiry, A Discourse before the Society for Inquiry of Madison University*. Hamilton, N.Y.: J. L. Fay, 1851. 30 pp.

17. *Nights of Weeping and Mornings of Joy; or, Words of Comfort Addressed to Those Who are Sowing in Tears and Shall Reap in Joy*. New York: E. H. Fletcher, 1852. 144 pp.; reprinted New York: Ward, 1868.

18. *The Judson Memorial: Intended as a Memento of Christian Sympathy for the Loved, Departed Judsons*. New York: Lewis Colby and Company, 1858. 312 pp.

19. *The Darkness of the World without the Bible a Reason for Its Universal Dissemination. A Sermon Delivered before the American and Foreign Bible Society, at Its Twenty-Ninth Anniversary, in Boston, May 20th, 1866*. New York: American and Foreign Bible Society, 1866. 24 pp.

20. *Conference Hymns: A New Edition Revised and Improved by the Addition of New Revival and Conference Hymns*. New York: U. D. Ward, 1868. 304 pp.

21. *Humility as an Element of Ministerial Character*. Read before the New York Baptist Pastors' Conference. New York: James Huggins, 1877. 16 pp.